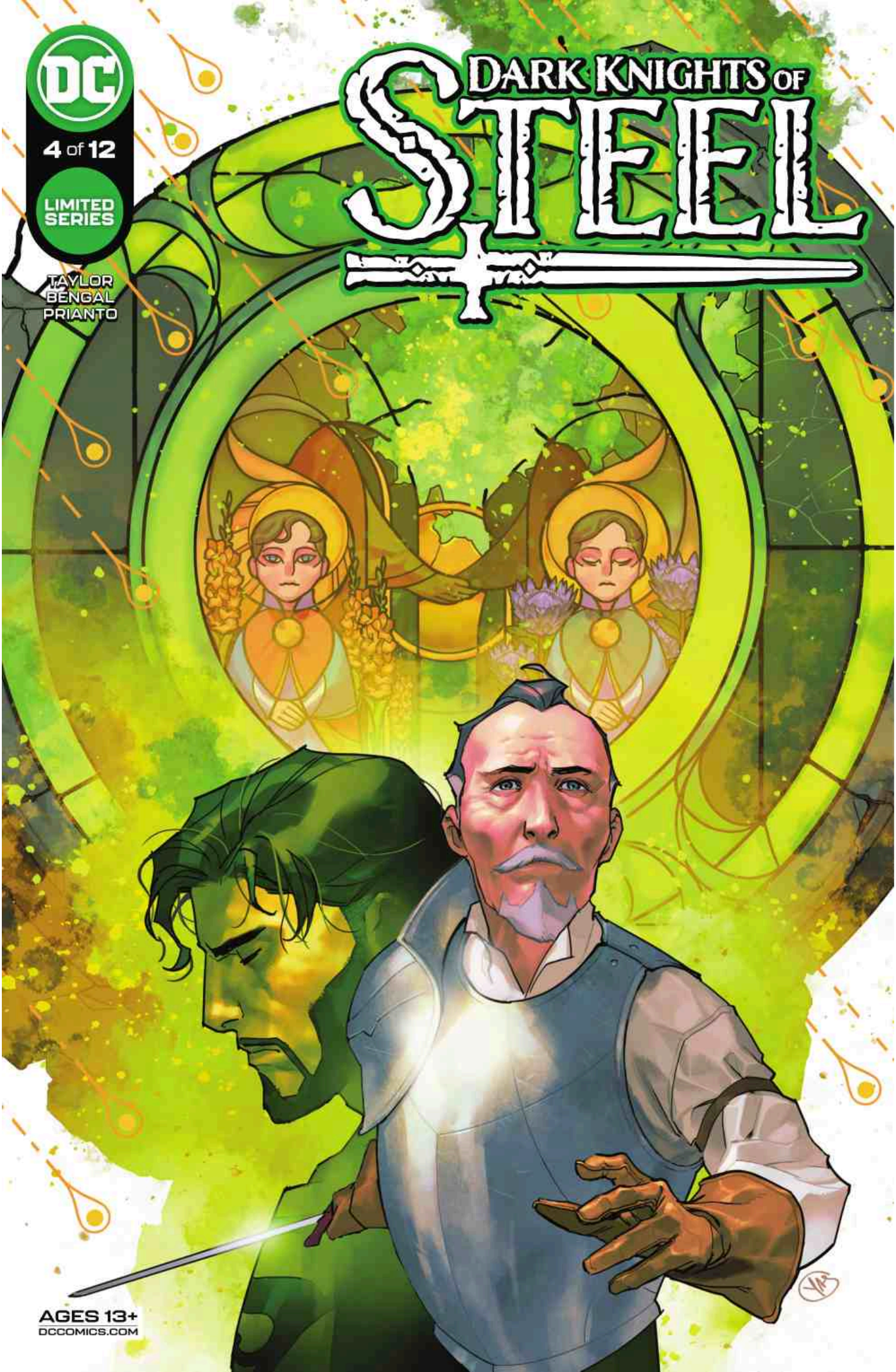
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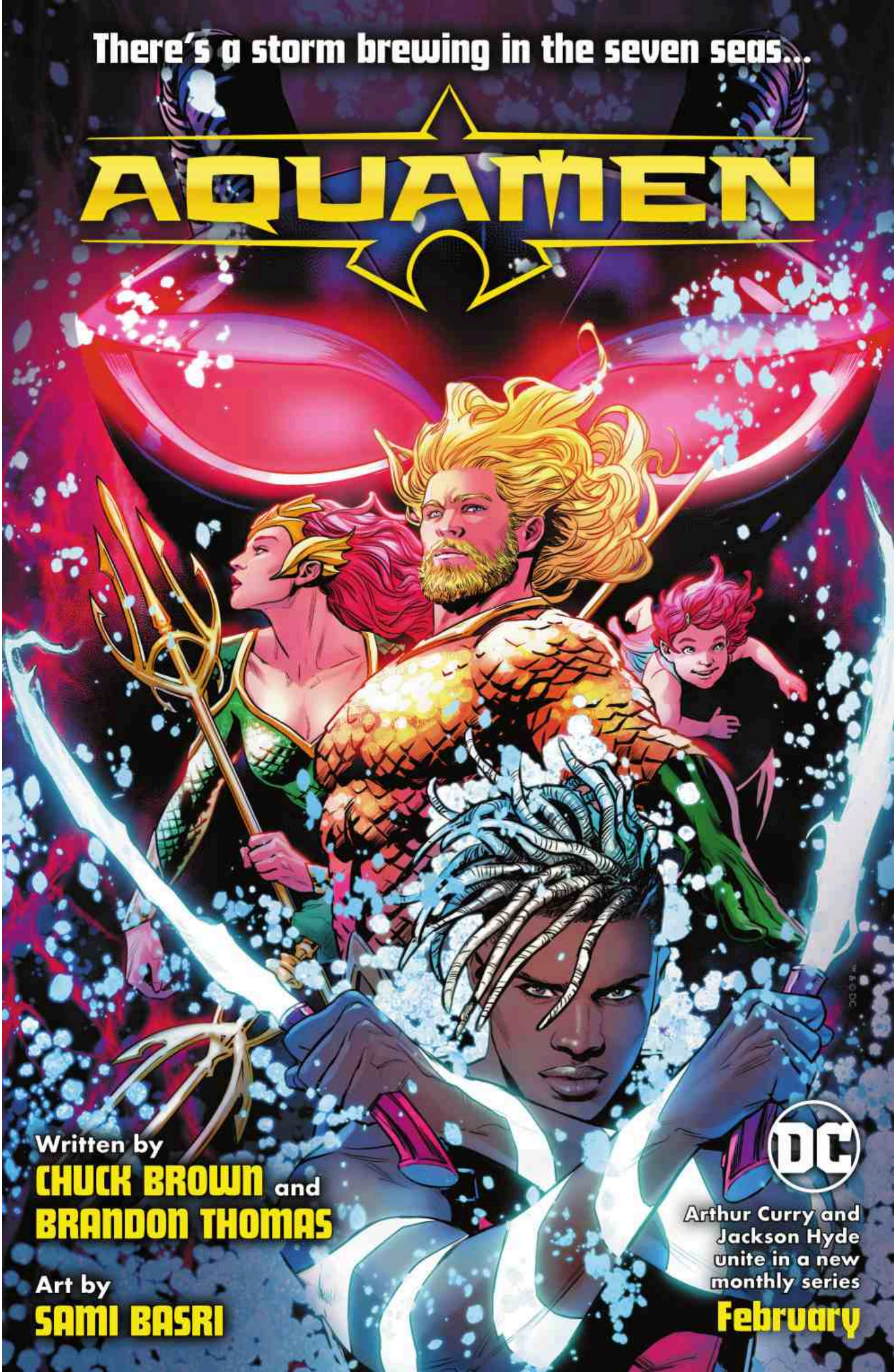
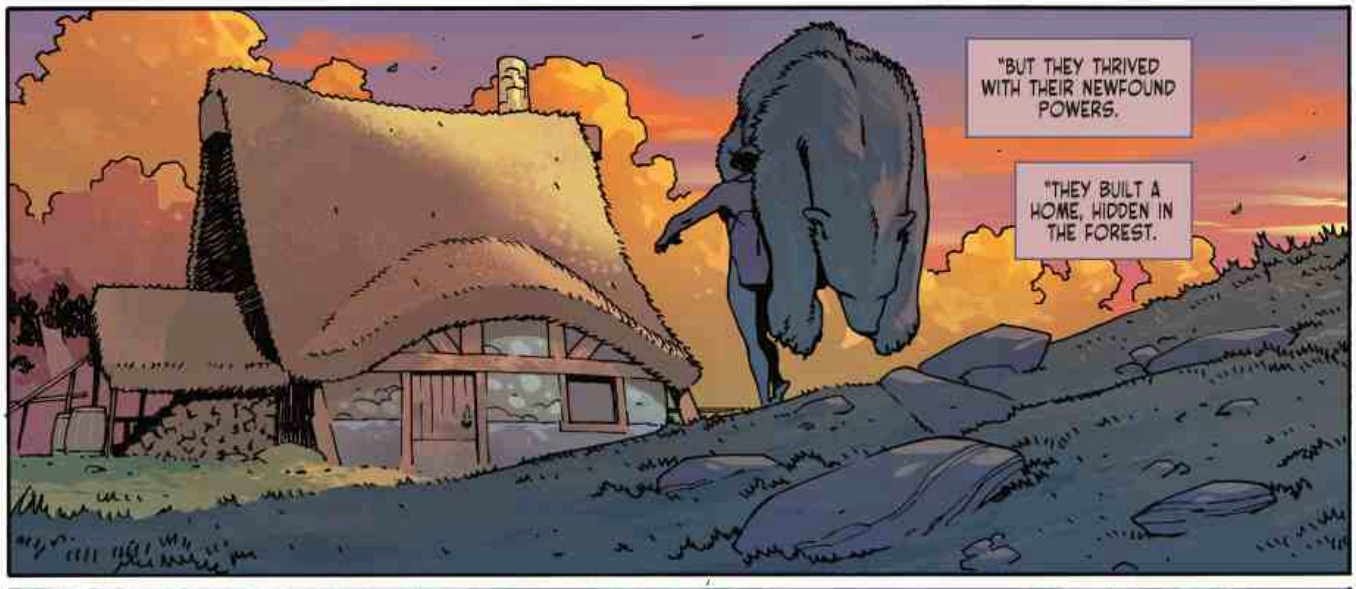

There's a storm brewing in the seven seas...
AQUAMEN
Written by
CHUCK BROWN and
BRANDON THOMAS
Art by
SAMI BASRI
DC
Arthur Curry and
Jackson Hyde
unite in a new
monthly series
February

HOW ARE YOU FEELING, BRUCE?
LIKE I WAS JUST BEATEN BY A GREEN ROCK.
The Lands of Magnus.
I'VE SPENT SO LONG STOPPING PEOPLE WITH POWERS. AND I'M AS BAD AS ALL OF THOSE FREAKS IN THE DUNGEON.
THEY'RE NOT ALL FREAKS. AND NEITHER ARE YOU.
AND YOU'RE HARDLY THE FIRST PERSON OF POWER TO ACT WITH HYPOCRISY.
I UNDERSTAND YOUR CRUSADE AGAINST MAGIC. YOU'RE TRYING TO PROTECT YOUR HOME AND THE PEOPLE YOU LOVE.
AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO THE WAYNES, OF COURSE YOU'D TRY TO STOP THAT FROM HAPPENING AGAIN.
BUT YOU SHOULD NOT FEAR WHAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.
NOT EVERYTHING DIFFERENT IS MALEVOLENT.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I AM, ALFRED.
YOU'RE BRUCE WAYNE. SON OF THE KING AND QUEEN. SON OF THOMAS AND MARTHA.
NO. I'M NOT.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW MY FATHER...HOW KING THOMAS COULD JUST PRETEND.
I WAS WATCHING THE SKIES THAT DAY, BRUCE.
"I SAW THE EL SHIP BURN ACROSS THE HEAVENS.
"AND I HEARD THE THUNDER THAT ANNOUNCED THEIR ARRIVAL ON THIS WORLD."

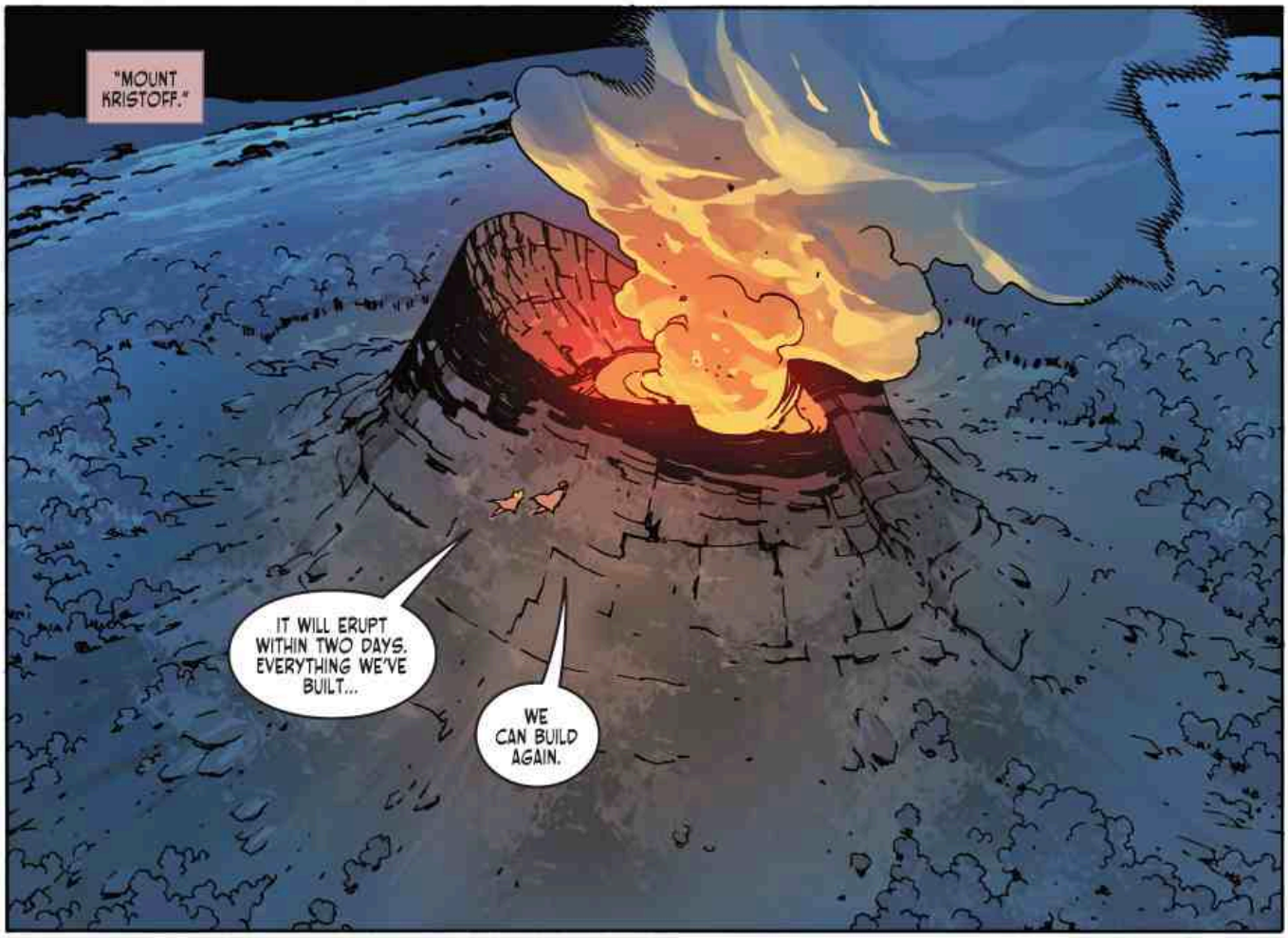
"A NEW FAMILY ON A STRANGE NEW WORLD.
"IF THEY WERE ANYONE ELSE, THEY WOULDN'T HAVE SURVIVED.


"BUT THEY THRIVED WITH THEIR NEWFOUND POWERS.
"THEY BUILT A HOME, HIDDEN IN THE FOREST.

"THEY WATCHED FROM AFAR AND THEY LISTENED TO THE NEARBY KINGDOM AT NIGHT, LEARNING OUR CUSTOMS AND OUR LANGUAGE.
"DESPITE LOSING THEIR WORLD, AND EVERYTHING ELSE THEY'D ENDURED...

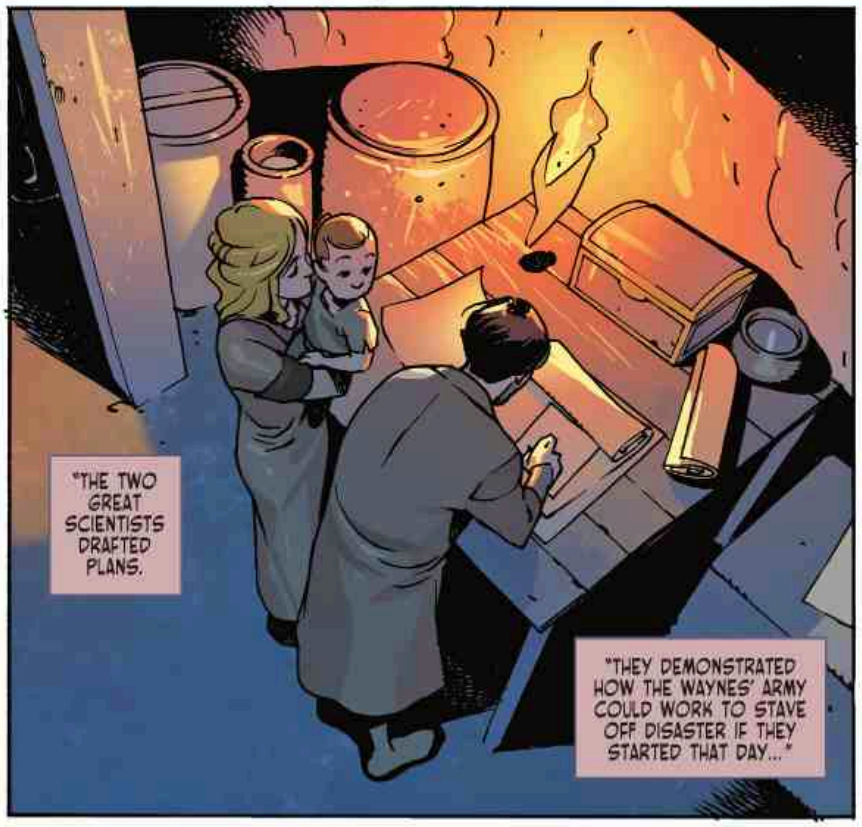
"...JOR-EL AND LARA FOUND HAPPINESS HERE.
"TWO SURVIVORS OF A LOST PLANET. AND A CHILD BORN OF THIS ONE."
CHILD OF THE GODS
WRITTEN BY Tom Taylor ART BY Bengal
COLOR BY Arif Prianto LETTERS BY Wes Abbott COVER BY Yasmine Putri
VARIANT COVERS BY Joshua Middleton & Bengal
EDITED BY Ben Abernathy
SUPERMAN CREATED BY Jerry Siegel AND Joe Shuster.
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE JERRY SIEGEL FAMILY.

"AND THEN CAME THE FIRST SHAKE."
RRRRRMMBBBLLLLLLE
LARA!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, JOR-EL.
I THOUGHT WE...
WE'RE NOT ON KRYPTON ANY LONGER.
"THEY TRACKED THE TREMORS.
"FEELING.
"FOLLOWING RIPPLES IN THE EARTH WITH ENHANCED EYES.
"AND FINALLY, FINDING THE SOURCE..."


"MOUNT KRISTOFF."
IT WILL ERUPT WITHIN TWO DAYS. EVERYTHING WE'VE BUILT...
WE CAN BUILD AGAIN.

WE CAN. BUT WHAT OF THE KINGDOM?

IF WE REVEAL OURSELVES, WE WILL HAVE TO LEAVE ANOTHER HOME.
YES. BUT WE CAN THINK THROUGH THIS AND STAY OUT OF IT, DIRECTLY.
WE CAN SHOW THEM HOW TO SAVE THEMSELVES.


"THE TWO GREAT SCIENTISTS DRAFTED PLANS.
"THEY DEMONSTRATED HOW THE WAYNES' ARMY COULD WORK TO STAVE OFF DISASTER IF THEY STARTED THAT DAY..."

"THE PLANS INCLUDED WHERE TO BUILD TRENCHES TO DIVERT THE LAVA. HOW TO SEW MASKS FOR THE HOT ASH AND SMOKE. TRAJECTORIES OF POTENTIAL MOLTEN ROCK FALLS.
"AND THEY HANDED THESE PLANS TO YOUR PARENTS' ADVISOR."
WHO ARE YOU? HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?
JUST, PLEASE. YOU ARE A WISE MAN. YOU WILL SEE THE TRUTH. LOOK AT THIS.
PASS IT TO THE KING AND QUEEN.
IT IS DONE.
"BUT THE WARNING OF THE ERUPTION--AND THE PLANS TO COUNTER IT--NEVER MADE IT TO THE WAYNES.
"THEIR ADVISOR, ALEXANDER LUTHOR, WAS STUBBORN AND PRIDEFUL, AND HAD HIS OWN BELIEFS.
"SO WHEN THE VOLCANO GREW CLOSER TO ERUPTING, THE KINGDOM HAD NO IDEA WHAT WAS COMING.
"THE ELS COULD HAVE RUN..."

"BUT THEY HAD SEEN ONE HOME LOST TO IGNORANCE AND ARROGANCE. THEY COULDN'T ALLOW ANOTHER."
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! LUTHOR! WHY HAVEN'T YOU EVACUATED?

LUTHOR. WHO IS THIS MAN? WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?
YOU DIDN'T TELL THEM?!

THE MOUNTAIN IS ABOUT TO EXPLODE.

IS THIS TRUE, LUTHOR?
NO, MY KING. I READ THE ANCIENT RECORDS.
THE MOUNTAIN HAS ALWAYS BEEN ANGRY AND HAS NEVER THREATENED US.
I ALSO CONSULTED THE STARS.

THE STARS? YOU ASKED *BURNING GASEOUS BALLS* FOR THEIR INSIGHT?
YOU ABSOLUTE IDIOT.

"AND THEN, THE MOUNTAIN ERUPTED."
KRA
KOOOM
MOUNT KRISTOFF HAS BLOWN.
THIS KINGDOM IS ABOUT TO BURN.
NO. IT ISN'T.
LARA? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
JOR-EL. WE CAN SAVE THEM.
GUARDS! SILENCE THIS MADNESS.

YOUR MAJESTIES...
CRK
CRAK
"I WAS A STRANGER FROM A LAND LOST TO WAR.
"AND YOUR PARENTS, THOMAS AND MARTHA, THEY TOOK ME IN. MADE ME A MEMBER OF THEIR COURT."
STOP THERE.
"I WOULD HAVE DONE ANYTHING TO PROTECT THEM..."
BY THE GODS.
WHAT ARE YOU?
A FRIEND.
"...BUT THEY DIDN'T NEED PROTECTING FROM THE ELS."

KING THOMAS. QUEEN MARTHA. I HAVE WATCHED YOU. I KNOW YOU TO BE GOOD AND KIND RULERS.
WE ARE NOT FROM HERE, BUT WE HAVE MADE THIS OUR HOME.
WE WILL PROTECT IT.
BUT I NEED YOU TO PROTECT SOMETHING FOR US.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, JOR-EL.
HIS NAME IS KAL-EL. LOOK AFTER HIM. WE WILL RETURN.
"THEY LEFT THEIR ONLY SON WITH QUEEN MARTHA..."

"...AND THEY REVEALED THEMSELVES TO THIS STRANGE NEW WORLD.
"THEY DID WHAT HAD TO BE DONE.
"BECAUSE IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.
KOBOOM
"TOGETHER, THEY SAVED THE KINGDOM.
WHOOOOO
"THEY WERE LOVED BY ALL..."

"...WELL, ALMOST ALL.

"LUTHOR'S NAME AND TITLE WERE TAKEN FROM HIM.
"HE WAS BANISHED FROM THE KINGDOM HIS ARROGANCE ALMOST DOOMED THEM.
"WE LATER LEARNED THE MOUNTAIN CONTAINED MORE THAN POTENTIAL DESTRUCTION."

WHAT'S--?

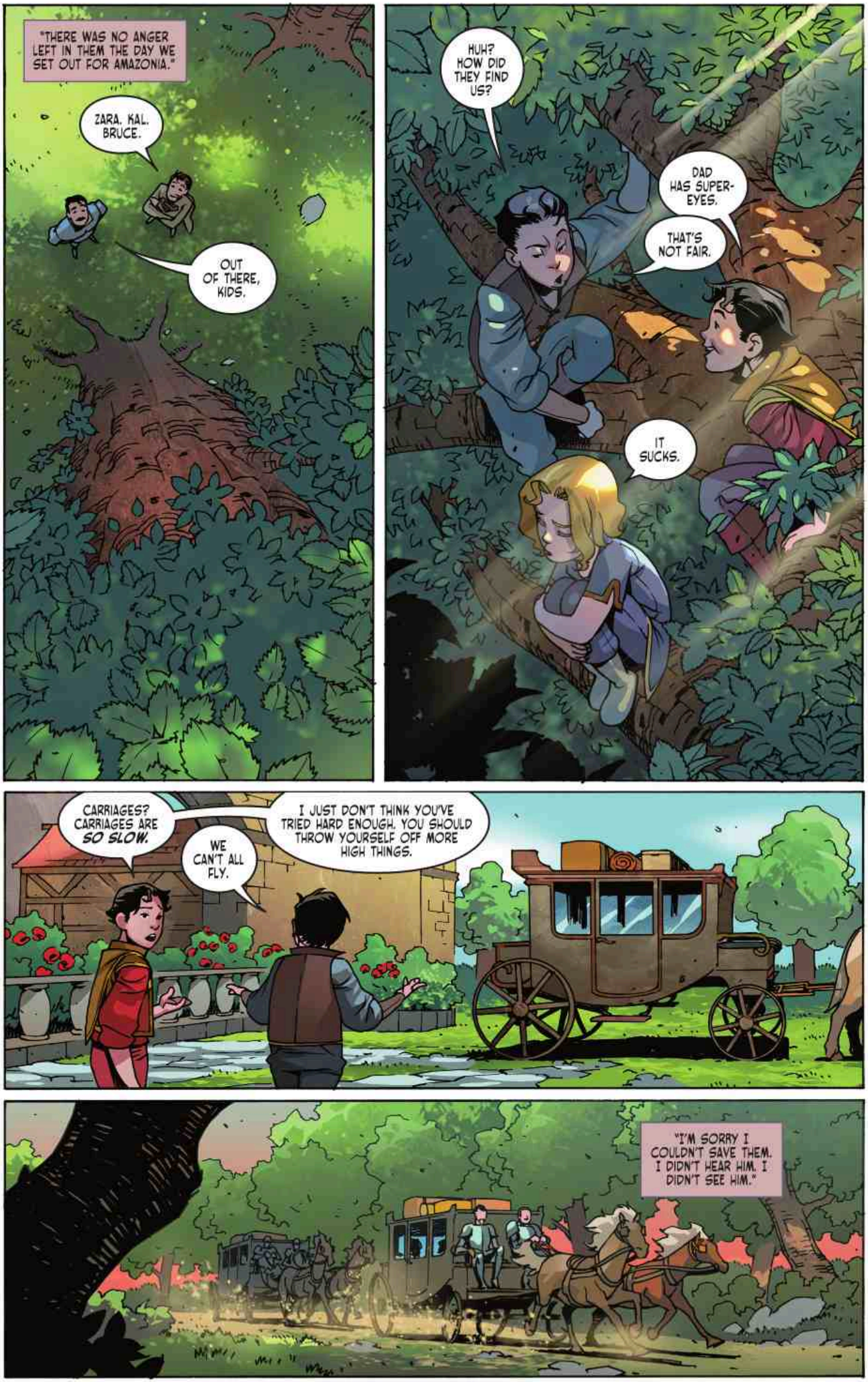
"LUTHOR WASN'T SEEN AGAIN...UNTIL THE DAY WITH YOUR PARENTS."

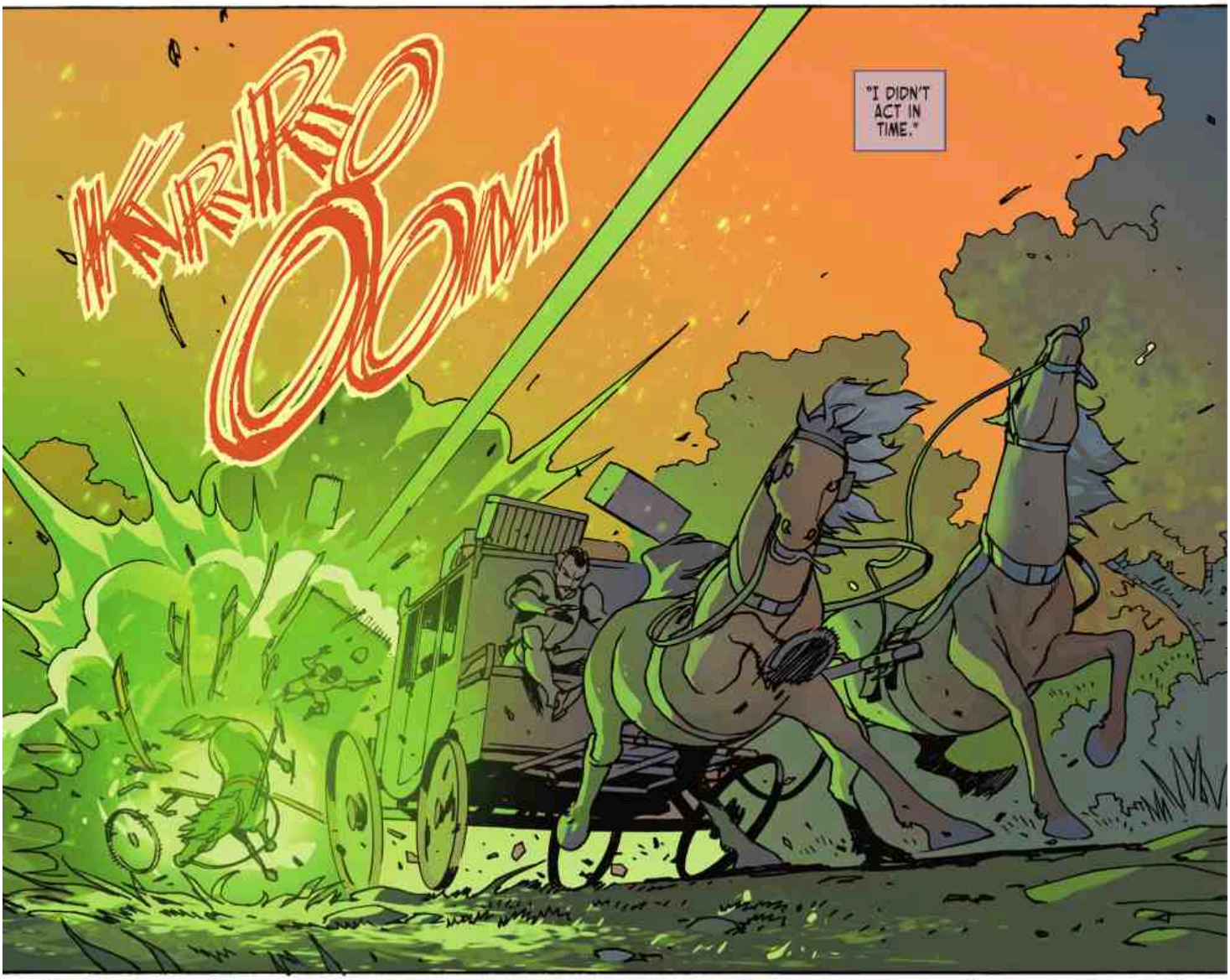
"JOR-EL AND LARA WERE HEROES IN OUR LAND.
"THOUGH, FEARED BY OTHERS."
THEY WILL LOOK LIKE US. THEY WILL SOUND LIKE US. BUT THEY ARE NOT LIKE US. THEY ARE DEMONS.
BRING ME CONSTANTINE.
"THEY BROUGHT SO MUCH KNOWLEDGE FROM THEIR WORLD.
"THEY GAVE OUR KINGDOM SO MUCH.
"THEY GAVE US MIRACLES.

"AND THEY BECAME THE CLOSEST FRIENDS TO THE WAYNES AND TO ME."

CLEARLY, THEY BECAME A LOT MORE THAN *FRIENDS.* OR I WOULDN'T BE HERE.
I WANT YOU TO KNOW, THERE WAS NO MALICE IN WHAT THEY DID.
JOR-EL MAY HAVE BEEN AN ALIEN, BUT HE WAS ALL TOO HUMAN.
MARTHA...WELL, JOR-EL WAS A GOD, AND HER HUSBAND GAVE ALL OF HIMSELF TO HIS KINGDOM.
"IT WAS A SINGLE NIGHT.
"A SINGLE MISTAKE.
"ONE THAT HURT THE PEOPLE THEY LOVED SO MUCH.
"A HURT THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE RECOVERED FROM..."

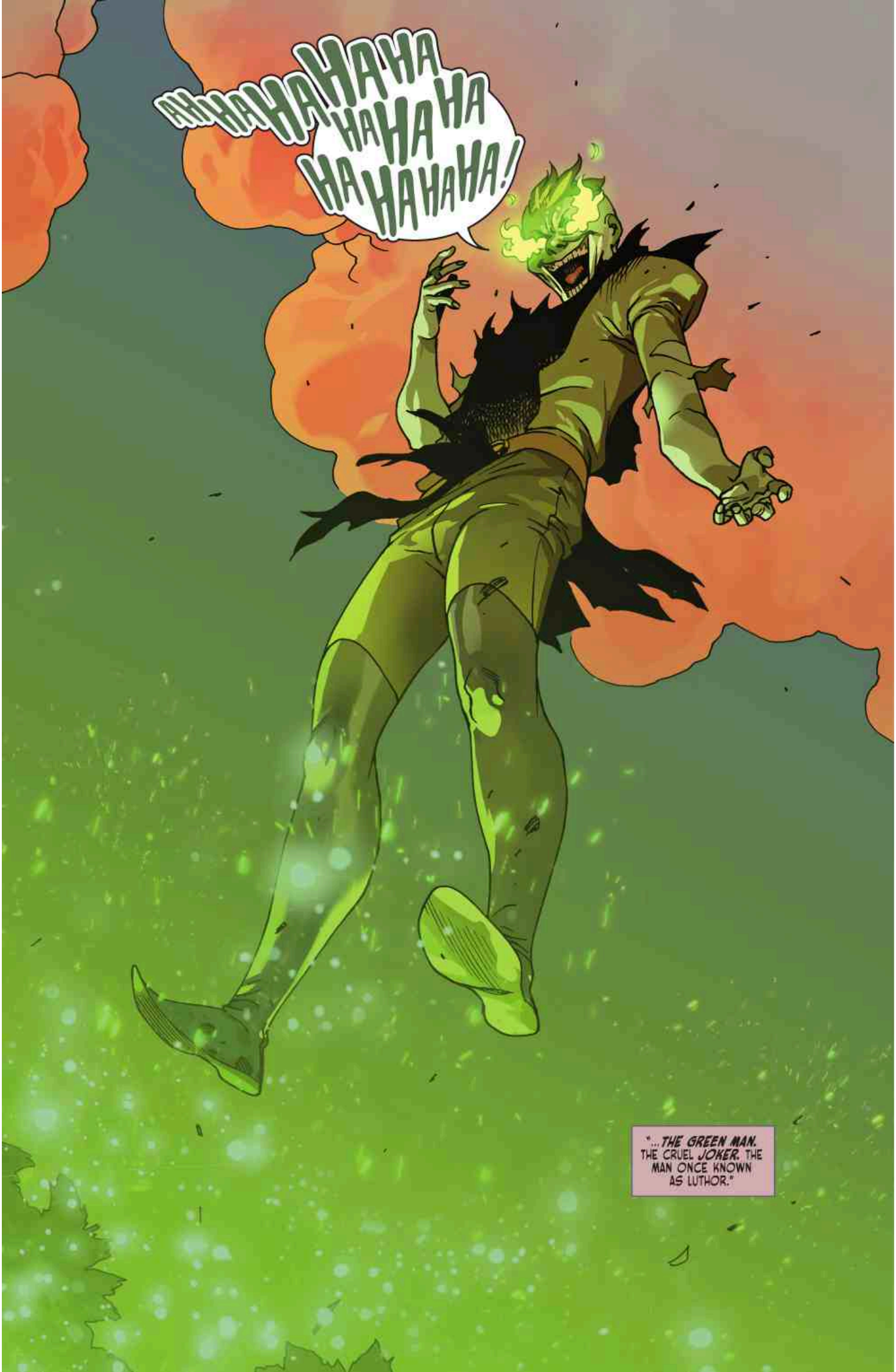
"...BUT THEN *YOU* WERE BORN.
"THOMAS COULDN'T FATHER CHILDREN.
"AND THE RESENTMENT HE HARBORED FADED AS YOU GREW.
"THOMAS LOVED YOU AS MUCH AS *ANY* FATHER HAS EVER LOVED A SON.
"AND YOU, BRUCE. YOU HEALED ALL THE WOUNDS."


"THERE WAS NO ANGER LEFT IN THEM THE DAY WE SET OUT FOR AMAZONIA."
ZARA. KAL. BRUCE.
OUT OF THERE, KIDS.
HUH? HOW DID THEY FIND US?
DAD HAS SUPER-EYES.
THAT'S NOT FAIR.
IT SUCKS.
CARRIAGES? CARRIAGES ARE SO SLOW.
WE CAN'T ALL FLY.
I JUST DON'T THINK YOU'VE TRIED HARD ENOUGH. YOU SHOULD THROW YOURSELF OFF MORE HIGH THINGS.
"I'M SORRY I COULDN'T SAVE THEM. I DIDN'T HEAR HIM. I DIDN'T SEE HIM."

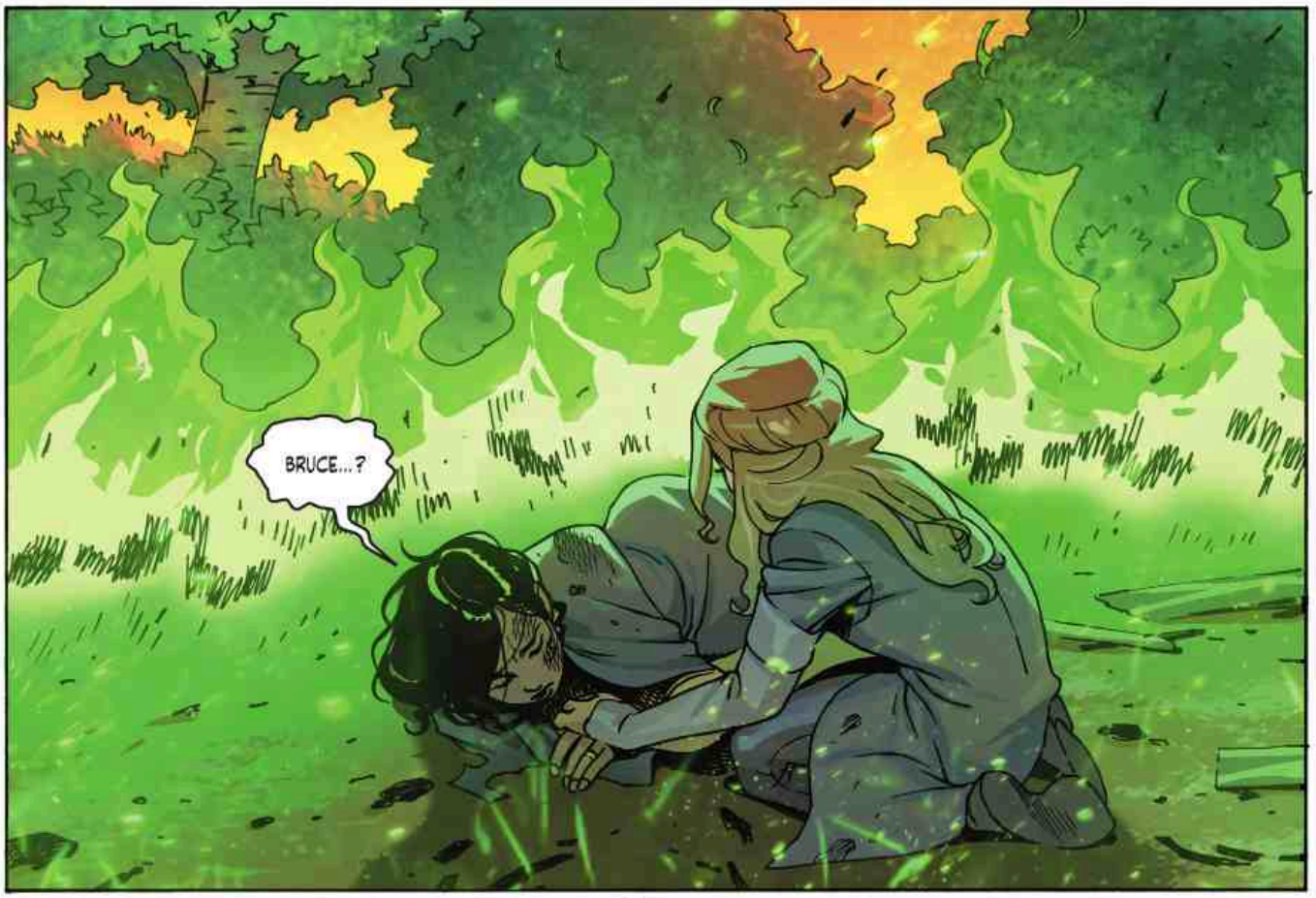

KRRR
BOOM
"I DIDN'T ACT IN TIME."

MARTHA!

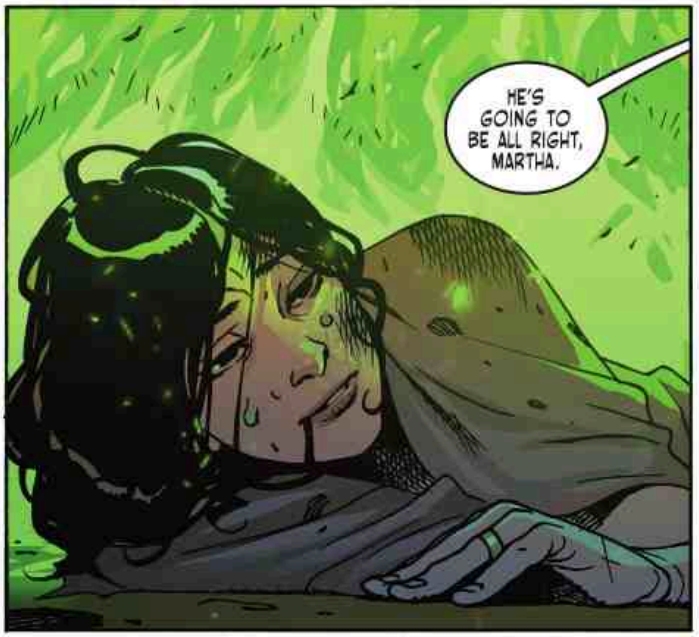
MARTHA?
WHOOPS! WRONG CARRIAGE. HA!
"I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS STILL OUT THERE. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THE RING THAT BURST FROM MOUNT KRISTOFF HAD BEEN WHISPERING TO HIS MIND..."


AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!
"...THE GREEN MAN. THE CRUEL JOKER. THE MAN ONCE KNOWN AS LUTHOR."

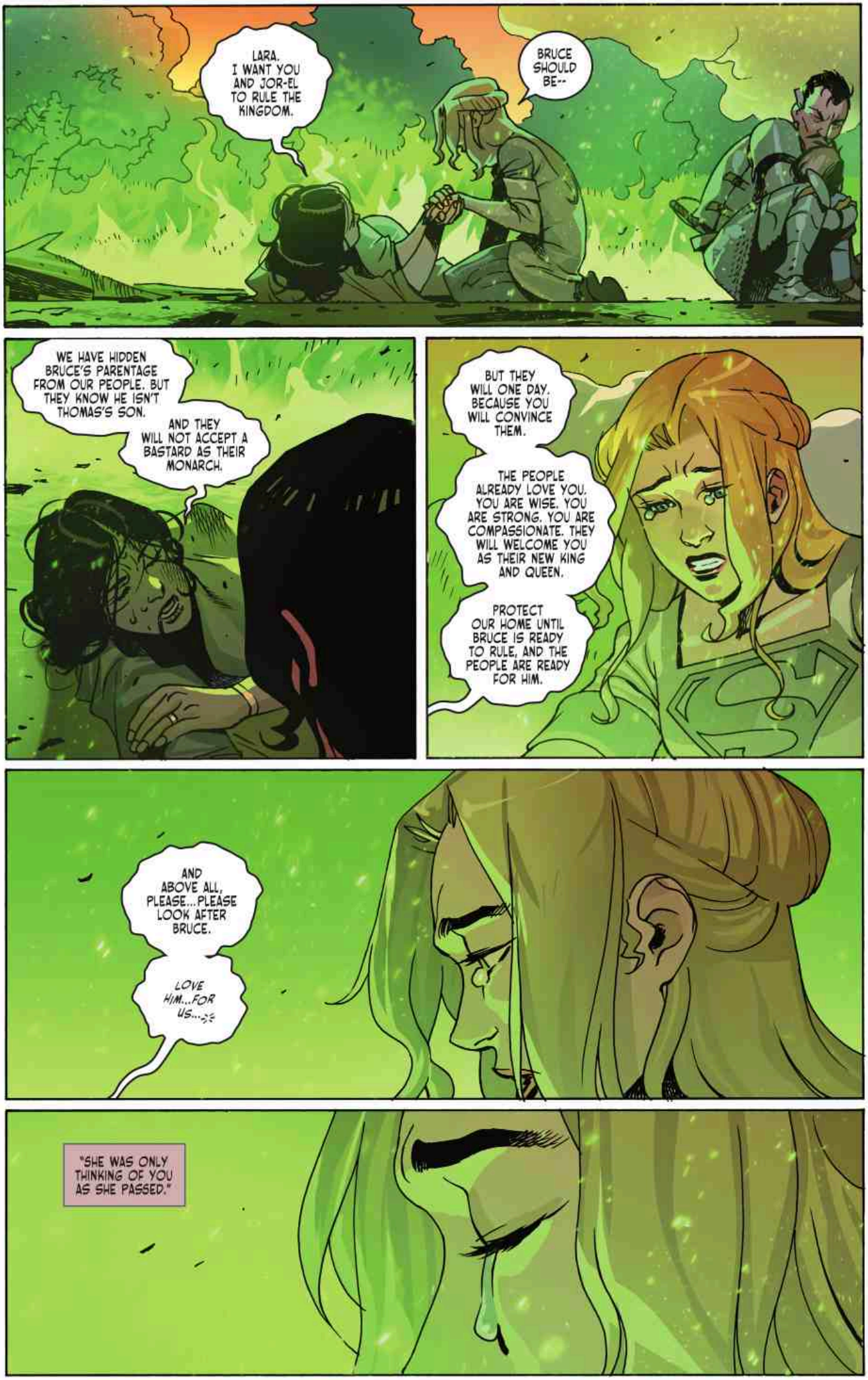
THOMAS...?
YOU.
HAHAHAHA!
ZZZZZT
LUTHOR!


BRUCE...?

HE...HE'S BREATHING.
HE APPEARS TO BE UNHARMED.


HE'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT, MARTHA.

ALFRED. LARA. LISTEN... TO ME. BEAR WITNESS.
I HAVE A FINAL DECREE.


LARA. I WANT YOU AND JOR-EL TO RULE THE KINGDOM.
BRUCE SHOULD BE--
WE HAVE HIDDEN BRUCE'S PARENTAGE FROM OUR PEOPLE. BUT THEY KNOW HE ISN'T THOMAS'S SON.
AND THEY WILL NOT ACCEPT A BASTARD AS THEIR MONARCH.
BUT THEY WILL ONE DAY. BECAUSE YOU WILL CONVINCE THEM.
THE PEOPLE ALREADY LOVE YOU. YOU ARE WISE. YOU ARE STRONG. YOU ARE COMPASSIONATE. THEY WILL WELCOME YOU AS THEIR NEW KING AND QUEEN.
PROTECT OUR HOME UNTIL BRUCE IS READY TO RULE, AND THE PEOPLE ARE READY FOR HIM.
AND ABOVE ALL, PLEASE...PLEASE LOOK AFTER BRUCE.
LOVE HIM...FOR US...
"SHE WAS ONLY THINKING OF YOU AS SHE PASSED."

I KNOW THE DOUBT IN YOUR MIND, BRUCE.
BUT YOU *ARE* THE SON OF THOMAS AND MARTHA WAYNE.
IT'S JUST YOU'RE ALSO SOMETHING *MORE.*

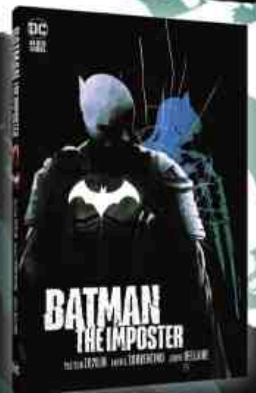
STOP THINKING YOU'RE NOT WORTHY OF THEM.
THEY WERE HARDLY PERFECT PEOPLE. NONE OF US ARE.

WITH JOR-EL'S MURDER, WE ARE ON THE CUSP OF WAR. AS THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF A WAR, I WILL DO ANYTHING TO AVOID THAT.
DO YOU HAVE A PLAN?
NO...

...BUT I HAVE A KING.
To be continued

An impersonator is haunting Gotham and murdering criminals.

CAN THE DARK KNIGHT STOP HIM AND CLEAR HIS NAME?



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